

Utah Cancer Control Program

Breast Self-exam Instruction



BSE Is for Women of All Ages



- Begin practicing BSE as soon as your breasts start developing. This will help you learn to notice any unusual changes
- As an adult woman, you should continue BSE throughout your life including during pregnancy and after menopause.

Performing Breast Self Examination



- Women should be doing BSE 7 to 10 days after the first day of their periods

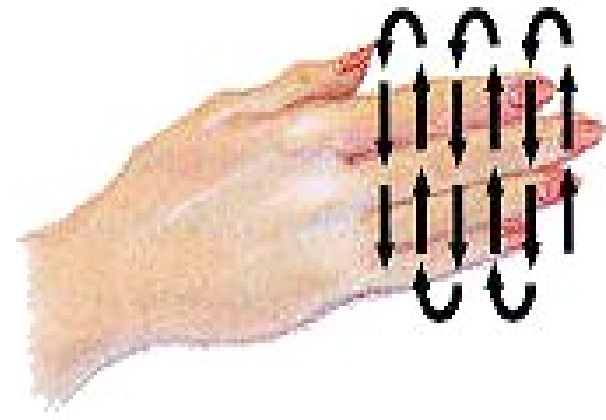
Getting Started

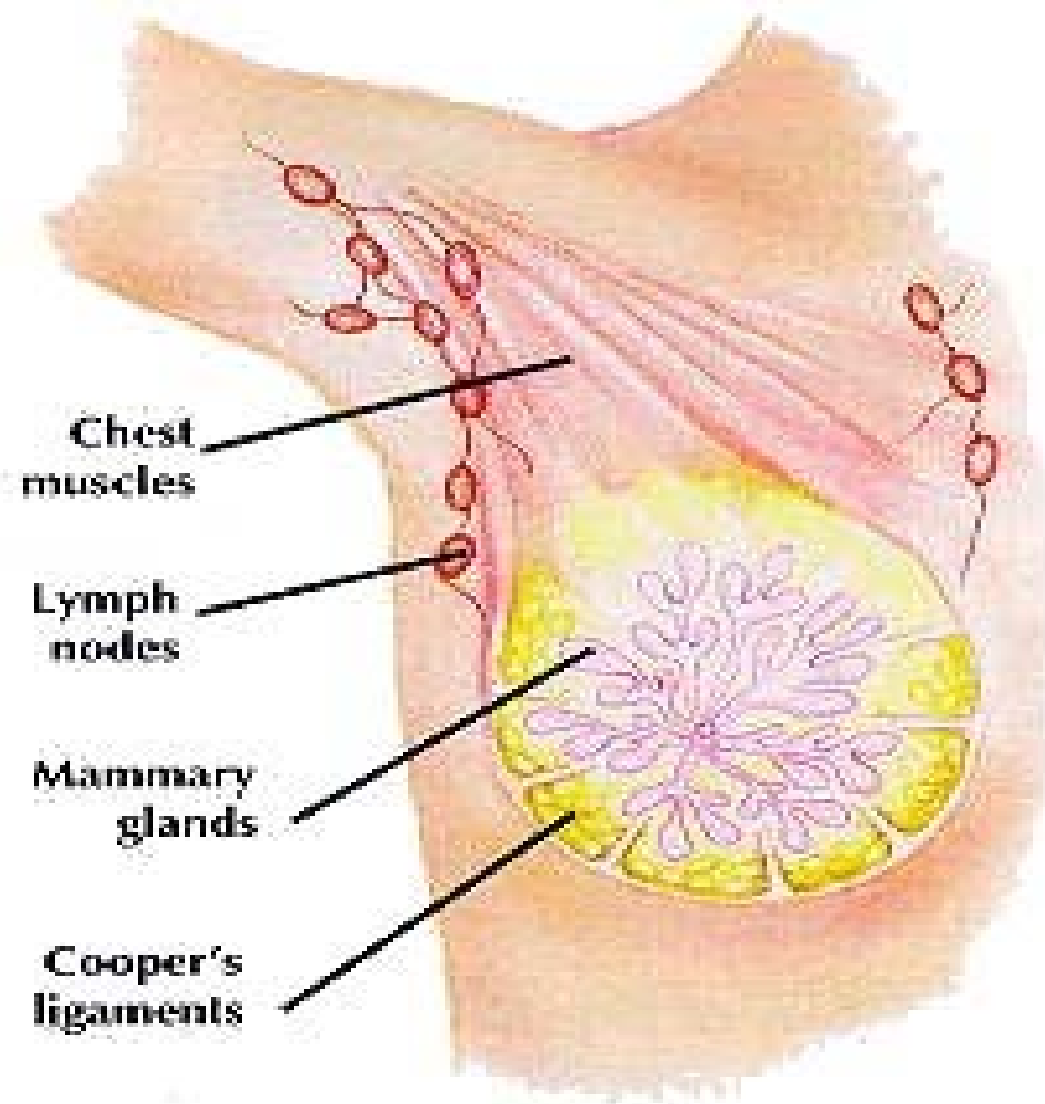
- Place a pillow or folded towel under your left shoulder and your left hand behind your head
- If a breast is not properly flattened against the chest, it is difficult to feel a lump – particularly in the outer upper quadrant, where tissue is thickest



Feeling

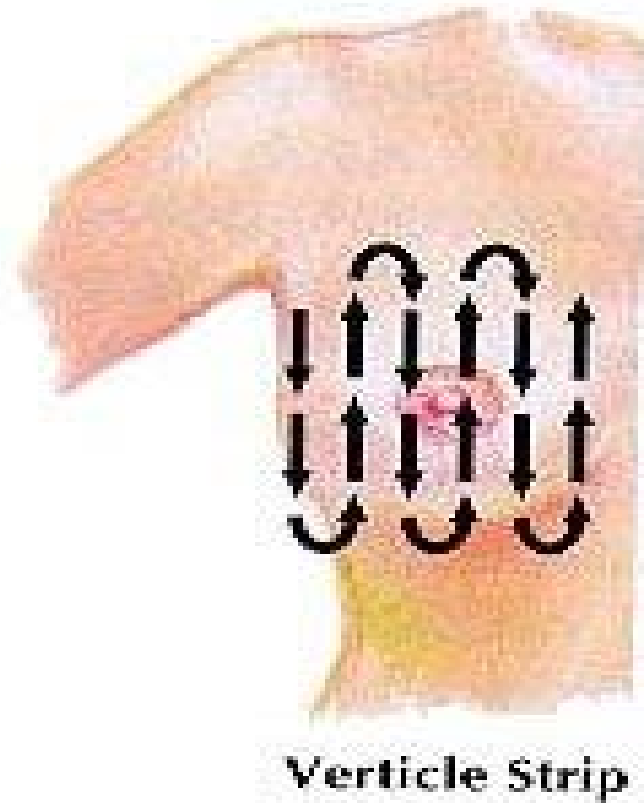
- Palpation, a careful and systematic feeling of your breasts, will give you a "touch picture" of their normal structure and condition.



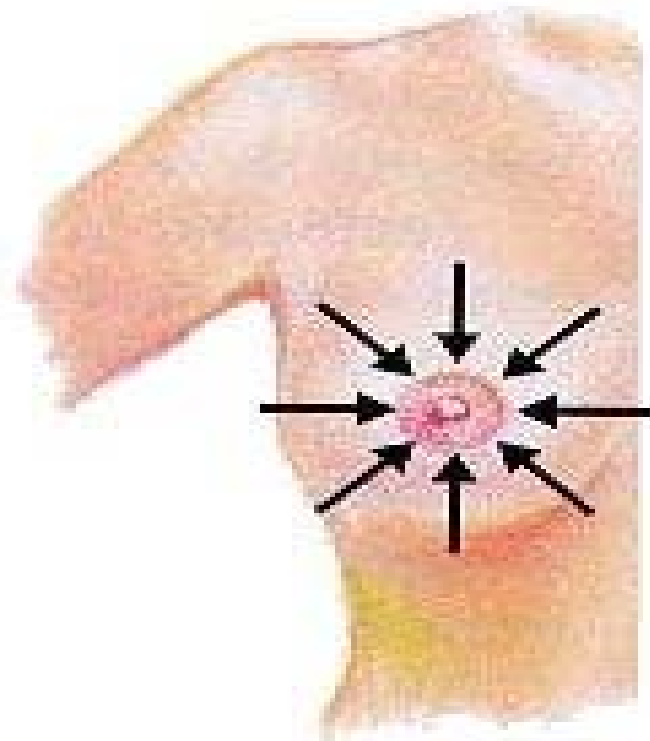


Be Thorough

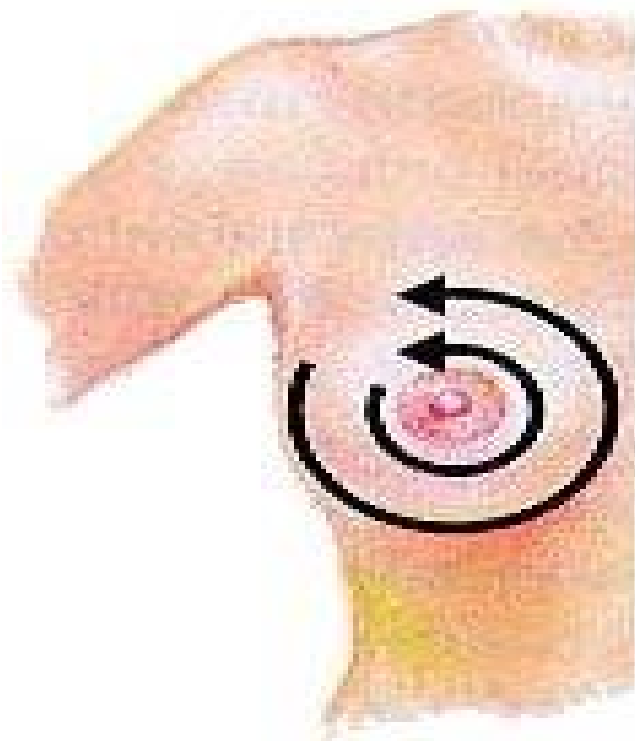
- Examine the entire area, including the lymph nodes, from your collarbone to just below your breasts, and from armpits to breastbone.
- .
- Start in the underarm area and have your fingers move downward little by little until you reach the area below the breast.



Different Patterns of Examination



Wedge Section



Concentric Circle

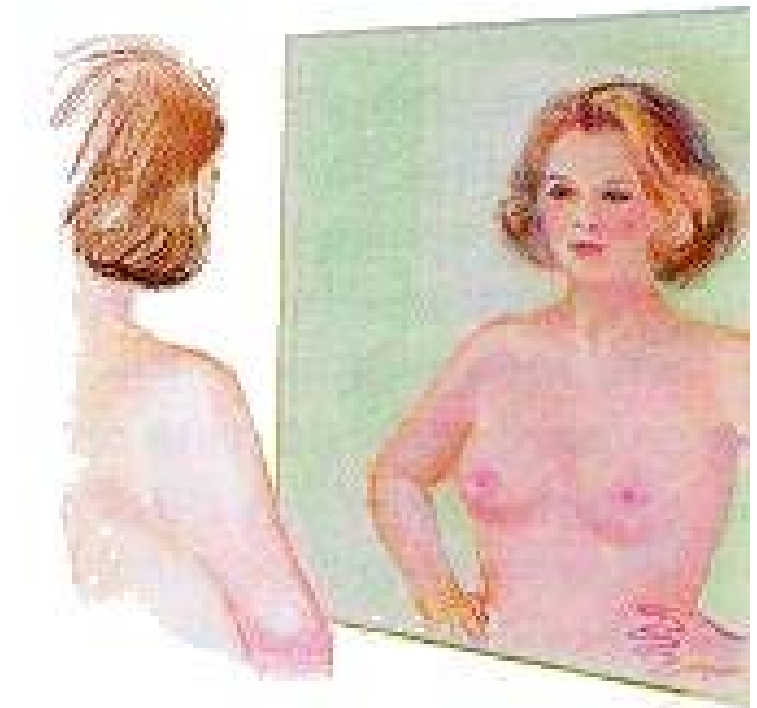
In the Shower

- Many lumps are more easily felt when breast and fingers are wet and slippery with soap lather (it reduces the friction).



In Front of a Mirror

- With your upper body unclothed, stand in front of a large mirror; A good light should be placed off to one side, rather than directly above the mirror or overhead – side lighting helps show irregularities.



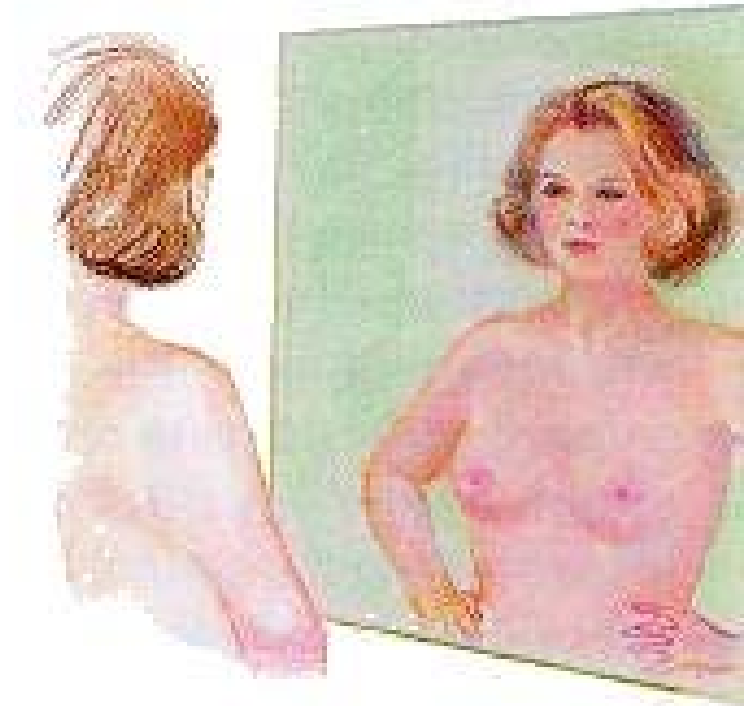
In Front of a Mirror

Examine the appearance of your breasts (1) with arms relaxed at your sides; (2) with arms raised;



In Front of a Mirror

- (3) with hands clasped in front of the forehead, palms squeezed together, to tighten chest pectoral muscles;
- (4) palms flat on sides of hips, pressing down.



Look



- Note the contours and relative placement of your breasts,
- The appearance of the areola and nipples,
- Any distortions or discoloration's of the skin or surface texture and.
- Their movement as you move your arms and chest muscles.

Normal Variations of the Breast



- Size.
- Texture - variable amounts of fibrous, glandular, and adipose tissue. Fibrocystic changes are normal.
- Nipple appearance - flat, erect, inverted, small/large.
 - Each of these variations will change with age, menstrual cycle, pregnancy and lactation.

Breast Cancer Signs & Symptoms



- Skin irritation
- Nipple discharge
- Swelling
- Distortion
- Pain
- Lump
- Retraction
- Scaliness
- Tenderness
- Thickening
- Dimpling

BSE Is Easy and Convenient



- Examining your breasts takes only 10 to 15 minutes each month, it costs nothing, can be done in private, and can save your life.

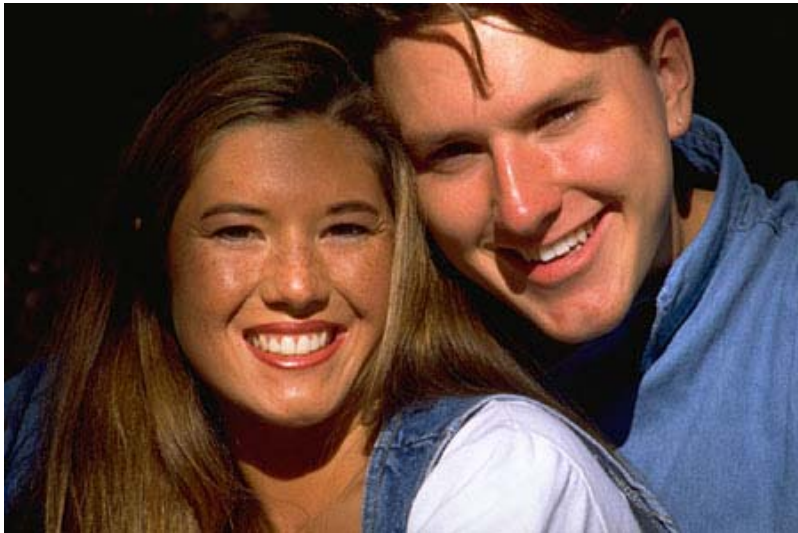
BSE Is Reassuring

- Once you have learned how your breasts feel normally, each month's re-examination may confirm you have not found any changes to report.



Remember

- Not all changes in your breasts mean cancer; 80 percent of all breast lumps are non-cancerous. Of those lumps that do prove to be cancerous 95 percent are found by women performing BSE.



BSE Can Be Life Saving

- Research shows that the tumors found by women practicing BSE are half the size of those discovered by doctors in non-BSE practicing women.
- The smaller a breast cancer tumor when discovered, the greater chance of effective treatment and cure. If all women would do BSE, see their doctors for regular cancer checkups, and have mammograms as recommended, **95** percent of all breast cancers could be halted before they become fatal.

Utah Cancer Control Program



Free Screening Services
Available at Your County Health
Department
Or Call

The Utah Cancer Control
Program

1-800-717-1811